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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/871,717	06/01/2001	Tara J. Valentin	HANN-0001	1429
23550	7590	06/24/2005	EXAMINER	
HOFFMAN WARNICK & D'ALESSANDRO, LLC			STEPHENS, JACQUELINE F	
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No. 09/871,717	Applicant(s) VALENTIN ET AL	
	Examiner Jacqueline F. Stephens	Art Unit 3761	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 April 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 22-28,30-42 and 56-63 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 22-28,30-42 and 56-63 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Allowable Subject Matter***

1. The indicated allowability of claims 30, 37-42, and 56-59 are withdrawn in view of the newly discovered reference(s) to Hisada USPN 6482196. The indicated allowability of claims 22-28 and 30-42, 60-63 is withdrawn in view of Yamaki USPN 5858012.

Rejections based on the newly cited reference(s) follow.

### ***Claim Interpretation***

2. The examiner interprets the term "incontinence article" to mean a multilayered composite structure that includes a liquid permeable body-side layer, a liquid impermeable outer cover, and an absorbent material positioned between the outer cover and the bodyside liner as disclosed in the specification page 1, lines 10-14. The examiner interprets the front and rear portion to mean a front portion for contacting a front side of a user and a rear portion for contacting a rear side of a user as disclosed in the specification page 7, lines 14-15. The examiner broadly interprets 'portion' to mean any part of the front or rear areas.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101***

3. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 28, 40, 56-59, and 61 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. In claims 28, 40, 56, and 61, the

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language "extends to a middle back area of a user" positively recites a part of the human body, and therefore, is directed to nonstatutory subject matter. Applicant has positively recited both the wearer of the article, and the article. Examiner suggests that Applicant modify the phrase to either "adapted to extend", or "intended to extend" language.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

5. Claims 22-24, 26, and 30-36, 40, and 60-63 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Yamaki et al. USPN 5858012.

As to claims 22, 23, 60, 62, and 63, Yamaki discloses an incontinence article, comprising:

a front portion (Figure 2);

a rear portion (Figure 2) joined to the front portion; and

a back guard 32 extending above the rear portion and the front portion when the article is worn by a user (Figure 1 and col. 2, lines 61-64). The back guard comprises an absorbent material 28 and a separately positioned elastic 21, 23 (Figure 2).

As to claim 24, the back guard 32 further comprises opposing side portions and a top portion (Figure 2).

As to claim 26, see Figure 2.

As to claims 30 , Yamaki discloses an incontinence article, comprising:

a front portion (Figure 2);

a rear portion (Figure 2) joined to the front portion; and

a back guard 32 extending above the rear portion and the front portion when the article is worn by a user (Figure 1 and col. 2, lines 61-64). The back guard 32 comprises a vertical extension 32 and opposing horizontal extensions (Figure 2).

As to claims 31-35, the back guard comprises an absorbent material 28 and a separately positioned elastic 21, 23 (Figure 2).

As to claim 36, the absorbent has a t-shaped structure, with the larger width being in the back guard 32. Therefore, the back guard 32 has a width larger than any width in the absorbent in the rear portion (Figure 2).

As to claims 40 and 61, the limitation of 'extends to a middle back of a user' is directed to an intended use of the article. "Intended use must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art." See *In re Casey*, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967) and *In re Otto*, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963). If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim limitations. In this case, the standard is relative to the size of a user. For example, the article is capable of extending to a middle back of a small infant.

6. Claims 30, 37, 39, and 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Hisada USPN 6482196.

As to claims 30 and 37, Hisada discloses an incontinence article, comprising:  
a front portion (Figure 1);  
a rear portion (Figure 1) joined to the front portion; and  
a back guard 3 extending above the rear portion and the front portion when the article is worn by a user, wherein the back guard comprises a vertical extension and

opposing horizontal extensions (Figures 1 – 2C) where a portion of the center back guard constitutes a vertical extension and the sides of the back guard 3 constitutes opposing horizontal extensions.

As to claim 39, Hisada discloses the horizontal extensions laterally couple to the front portion (Figures 1 and 2A).

As to claim 40, the limitation of 'extends to a middle back of a user' is directed to an intended use of the article. "Intended use must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art." See *In re Casey*, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967) and *In re Otto*, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963). If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim limitations. In this case, the standard is relative to the size of a user. For example, the article is capable of extending to a middle back of a small infant.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the

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invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

9. Claims 25 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamaki et al. USPN 5858012. Yamaki discloses the present invention substantially as claimed except Yamaki discloses the side portions and back guard is linear. It would have been an obvious matter of design choice to modify the side portions and back guard to be curved since applicant has not disclosed that the curved shape solves any state problem or is for any particular purpose and it appears that the invention of Yamaki would perform equally well with the linear portions since Yamaki teaches notches in the back guard to be smoothly curved along the wearer's waist (col. 3, lines 26-30).

10. Claims 28, 41, and 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamaki et al. USPN 5858012. Yamaki does not disclose the vertical



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extension and horizontal extensions have a length of approximately 1.0 – 10.0 inches.

Yamaki recognizes the length of the extensions should be sufficient to fit above the prominence of a wearer's belly and around a wearer's waist (col. 2, lines 24-32). It would have been an obvious matter of design choice to provide the article of Yamaki with the claimed dimensions, since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the size of a component. A change in size is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art. *In re Rose*, 105 USPQ 237 (CCPA 1955).

11. Claims 38, 41 and 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hisada USPN 6482196.

As to claim 38, Hisada discloses the present invention substantially as claimed except that Hisada discloses the horizontal extension couple linearly to the front portion instead of diagonally. It would have been an obvious matter of design choice to modify the horizontal extension to couple diagonally to the front since applicant has not disclosed that the curved shape solves any state problem or is for any particular purpose and it appears that the invention would perform equally well with the linear or diagonal coupling.

As to claims 41 and 42, Hisada does not disclose the vertical extension and horizontal extensions have a length of approximately 1.0 – 10.0 inches. Hisada recognizes the length of the extensions should be sufficient to fit above the prominence of a wearer's belly and around a wearer's waist (col. 2, lines 24-32). It would have been

an obvious matter of design choice to provide the article of Hisada with the claimed dimensions, since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the size of a component. A change in size is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art. *In re Rose*, 105 USPQ 237 (CCPA 1955).

12. Claims 56-59 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hisada USPN 6482196 in view of Glaug et al. USPN 5601545.

As to claims 56 and 57, Hisada discloses the present invention substantially as claimed. However, Hisada does not disclose the incontinence article guards have absorbent material. Glaug teaches an absorbent article with additional absorbent material in the waist areas for improved containment in the waist, particularly when a wearer is in a prostrate position (col. 1, lines 15-20 and 36-41). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the back and front guards of Hisada with absorbent material to provide improved containment 'as taught in Glaug, in the regions, which are protected by the front and back guards.

Hisada/Glaug discloses an incontinence article, comprising a front portion and front guard 2 (Hisada Figures 1 and 2A); and a rear portion and back guard 3(Figures 1 and 2A) joined to the front portion. The limitations of 'extends ...to a middle back of a user' and 'extends... to a middle chest area of a user' are is directed to an intended use of the article. "Intended use must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from

the prior art." See *In re Casey*, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967) and *In re Otto*, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963). If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim limitations. In this case, the standard is relative to the size of a user. For example, the article is capable of extending to a middle back and middle chest of a small infant. The front and back guards of Hisada/Glaug comprise absorbent material (Glaug Abstract).

As to claim 58, Hisada/Glaug disclose elastics about the periphery of the front and rear guards (Hisada Figures 1-2C).


As to claim 59, Hisada/Glaug does not disclose the vertical extension and horizontal extensions have a length of approximately 1.0 – 10.0 inches. Hisada recognizes the length of the extensions should be sufficient to fit above the prominence of a wearer's belly and around a wearer's waist (col. 2, lines 24-32). It would have been an obvious matter of design choice to provide the article of Hisada with the claimed dimensions, since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the size of a component. A change in size is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art. *In re Rose*, 105 USPQ 237 (CCPA 1955).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jacqueline F. Stephens whose telephone number is (571) 272-4937. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9:00-5:30.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Larry Schwartz can be reached on (571) 272-4390. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

  
Jacqueline F Stephens  
Examiner  
Art Unit 3761

June 22, 2005



Larry I. Schwartz  
Supervisory Patent Examiner  
Group 3700